

SECTION 8.25. Section 8.29(a) of S.L. 2015-241 reads as rewritten:

"SECTION 8.29.(a) Of the funds appropriated by this act for the At-Risk Student Services Alternative School Allotment for the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium, the State Board of Education shall use up to six million dollars (\$6,000,000) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and up to ~~six million dollars (\$6,000,000)~~ three million two hundred fifteen thousand three hundred seventy-one dollars (\$3,215,371) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year for the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program administered by the Department of Public Instruction. The ~~Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the~~ Department may use these funds to provide a second-year or a third-year grant to grant recipients approved under the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program pursuant to Section 8.19 of S.L. 2014-100. The Department shall award third-year grants for the 2016-2017 fiscal year with any of the funds remaining after awarding second-year grants to recipients approved under this section. From the funds available, a third-year grant recipient shall be awarded a proportional share of funds based upon the amount of the second-year grant awarded to the recipient in the prior fiscal year.

Of the funds appropriated for the program, the Department of Public Instruction may use up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for each fiscal year to administer the program."

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION

SECTION 8.27.(a) Purpose. – The State Board of Education shall establish a Request for Proposal (RFP) for up to five local alternative teacher preparation programs (LATP programs) administered by local boards of education to prepare, support, and recommend initially licensed lateral entry teachers for continuing licensure.

SECTION 8.27.(b) Request for Proposal. – By September 15, 2016, the State Board of Education shall issue the RFP to local boards of education. The RFP shall include the following criteria:

- (1) Program of study requirements. – At a minimum, the LATP program shall provide 150 contact hours of appropriate pedagogy and content for continued licensure in the initially licensed teacher's area of licensure that is comparable to the quality of instruction required for a traditional teacher preparation program, as provided in G.S. 115C-296.10. Local boards of education shall include evidence of relevant partnerships with institutions of higher education, including community colleges, private two-year colleges, and public or private colleges or universities.
- (2) Mentoring and support requirements. – At a minimum, the LATP program shall provide 150 contact hours with mentor teachers, classroom coaching, and periodic evaluations with timely feedback to each individual in the program over the initially licensed teacher's first year of employment.
- (3) Minimum program size. – The LATP program shall be administrated by a local board of education with a minimum student population of 20,000 or higher or by a coalition of local boards of education that together have a minimum student population of 20,000 or higher.

Local boards of education shall submit their proposals to the State Board by January 6, 2017. Proposals may be submitted by individual local boards of education or by coalitions of multiple local boards of education. Proposals shall contain detailed information on the estimated costs, including a cost per teacher participant and anticipated funding sources for operation of the program.

SECTION 8.27.(c) Selection by State Board of Education. – By March 15, 2017, the State Board of Education shall review the proposals submitted by local boards of education and shall select up to five proposals for approval based on program quality, viability, and use of evidence-based principles in program design.

SECTION 8.27.(d) Program Implementation. – The selected LATP programs shall be implemented beginning with the 2017-2018 school year and ending with the 2021-2022 school year. The local board or boards of education for each selected LATP program shall provide any requested information and access to the independent research organization selected by the State Board of Education to evaluate the programs pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

SECTION 8.27.(e) Program Continuation. – The selected LATP programs shall meet the following annual benchmark standards:

- (1) A program shall have a completion rate of no less than seventy percent (70%) of initial enrollees.
- (2) A program shall provide the minimum contact hour requirements and other program elements contained in the proposal approved by the State Board of Education.
- (3) A program shall demonstrate an increase in retention of lateral entry teachers over the previous year's retention rate.
- (4) A program shall be fully financed by the local board of education, based on the per teacher cost estimate contained in the proposal approved by the State Board. Funding may be through public or private funds, as available.

A program that fails to meet any of the benchmark standards shall be terminated by the State Board and shall not be continued in the following school year.

SECTION 8.27.(f) LATP Program Evaluation. – The State Board of Education shall contract with an independent research organization to evaluate how the LATP programs have accomplished, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Recruitment of lateral entry teachers into the classroom.
- (2) Retention rates for lateral entry teachers beyond initial licensure.
- (3) Quality of classroom instruction by lateral entry teachers prepared through the LATP program as compared to those prepared by traditional teacher education programs as demonstrated by multiple measures, including student performance.
- (4) Teacher vacancy rates in local school administrative units participating in the LATP program as compared to similarly situated local school administrative units.
- (5) Funding mechanisms used to support the LATP program, including sources and stability of funding.
- (6) Recommendations regarding the continuation, expansion, or elimination of LATP programs.

The independent research organization shall report annually to the State Board beginning October 15, 2017, on the progress of local boards of education in implementing the LATP programs. The independent research organization shall submit an initial report no later than October 15, 2020, to the State Board on the implementation and evaluation of the LATP programs and shall submit a final report no later than October 15, 2022, to the State Board on all aspects of the implementation and evaluation of the LATP programs. The State Board shall provide the report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2020, and by December 15 of each year thereafter through 2022.

SECTION 8.27.(g) Issuance of Licenses. – The Department of Public Instruction shall issue a license to all individuals who (i) successfully complete LATP programs, (ii) are recommended by the local board of education, and (iii) otherwise meet licensure requirements.

SECTION 8.27.(h) Credit for Work Successfully Completed. – If an initially licensed lateral entry teacher leaves a local board of education with a LATP program before completing the program and is hired to teach by another local board of education in the State, that teacher shall receive credit for any work successfully completed as part of the program.

SECTION 8.27.(i) Use of Funds. – Of the funds appropriated to the Department of Public Instruction for the 2016-2017 fiscal year to implement the LATP programs, the Department may use up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) in nonrecurring funds for the State Board of Education to contract with the independent research organization as required by this section. Any remaining funds shall be used to award one-year grants to each LATP program selected under subsection (c) of this section for the purposes of implementing the program. Each selected LATP program shall be awarded a proportional amount of the funds available.

TEACHER ASSISTANT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PILOT PROGRAM

SECTION 8.29.(a) Purpose. – The purpose of this section is to establish a pilot program for the local boards of education of the Anson County, Franklin County, Moore County, Richmond County, and Scotland County school administrative units to provide tuition assistance awards to part-time or full-time teacher assistants working in those local school administrative units to pursue a college degree that will result in teacher licensure. Tuition assistance awards under the program may be provided for part-time or full-time coursework. A